REMARKS

Claims 1, 2 and 5-34 have been cancelled without prejudice, and claims 35-43 have been added. No new matter has been added by virtue of the new claims. For instance, support for the new claims appears e.g. at page 3, last paragraph; page 6, lines 20-22; and the original claims of the application.

Applicants respond as follows to the rejections outstanding in the prior Office Action.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 7-17, 28, 29, 32 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 over Giesecke (U.S. Patent 4,568,570) or Matuzaki et al. (U.S. Patent 4,734,299).

Claims 18-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 over Giesecke (U.S. Patent 4,568,570) or Matuzaki et al. (U.S. Patent 4,734,299).

Claims 6, 23-27, 30 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 over Giesecke (U.S. Patent 4,568,570) or Matuzaki et al. (U.S. Patent 4,734,299) in combination with Kunzig (U.S. Patent 4,298,636) or Feldstein (U.S. Patent 4,321,285).

For the sake of brevity, the three rejections are addressed in combination. Such a combined response is considered appropriate because, *inter alia*, each of the rejections relies on the Giesecke and Matuzaki et al. as the sole or primary citations.

Each of the rejections is traversed.

Indpendent claim 35 (the only pending independent claim) calls for use of a metal activator that is one or more agents chosen from silver (II), cobalt (III), ruthenium (V), (VI), (VII), (VIII), cerium (III) or (IV), iron (II) or (III), manganese (IV or higher), rhodium (IV) or vanadium (IV) or (V).

None of the cited documents disclose or otherwise suggest use of any of those agents as claimed by Applicants. Indeed, the entire thrust of the primary citations of the Giesecke and Matuzaki et al. is to use of **silver (I)**. No suggestion is seen to employ silver (II) agent in the systems reported in Giesecke or Matuzaki et al..

Thus, for instance, the Matuzaki et al. documents states the following at column 2, lines 11-15:

> According to the invention, there is provided a sensitizing agent for electroless plating which comprises a solution of at least one palladium (II), silver (I), copper (I), copper (II), copper (II), and mickel (I) compounds dissolved in an amide.

Similarly, the Giesecke document states the following at column 1, lines 52-61:

> According to the invention, such a "seeding" is now achieved by a process in which
> (a) the surface to be metallised is wetted with an activating solution containing a silver-I compound which is sparingly soluble in water and has been converted into a soluble form with the aid of complexing agents,
> (b) the soluble complex compound is split back into the sparingly soluble silver-I compound and
> (c) the silver-I compound remaining on the surface is reduced.

None of the documents provide any suggestions of the other agents recited in claim 34, which other agents are further recited in claims rare further recited in claims 39 and 41.

Also, as previously discussed, Feldstein and Kunzig specifically ***teach against*** the proposed combination of those documents. In particular, the object of Feldstein is to obviate use of noble metals, whereas Kunzig is specifically directed to use of noble metals.

Thus, Feldstein states the following at column 3, lines 6-8:

> It is another object to provide a process the nature of which the necessity of using noble metals is eliminated.

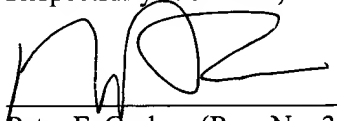
Kunzig states the following at column 1, lines 45-52:

> It is another object to activate plastic surface for subsequent metallization with noble metal nucleic by a process which employs nonpolluting materials which can be handled with excessive expenditures for equipment.
>
> Yet another object is to provide a process for nucleating plastic surface with a noble metal without the generation of toxic or otherwise dangerous vapors.

In view thereof, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are requested.

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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